



Health Facts TOBACCO CESSATION



Introduction

Nicotine is one of the most frequently used addictive drugs in the United States. Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death in the United States, causing more than 440,000 deaths each year. Across the Department of Defense, the military remains a high user of all tobacco products.

Nationally, smoking or dipping results in more than 5.6 million years of potential life lost each year. Approximately 80% of adult smokers started smoking or dipping before the age of 18. Every day, nearly 4,000 young people under the age of 18 try their first cigarette or dip. More than 6.4 million children living today will die prematurely because of a decision they will make as adolescents — the decision to smoke or dip.

If you have ever tried to quit tobacco use, you probably know how difficult it can be. That's because nicotine is an extremely addictive drug. Within 5 seconds of taking a puff of smoke, nicotine travels directly to the brain. It tells the brain to release chemicals that make you want to take in more. Quitting may be hard due to not only the physical addiction and withdrawal, but also due to the longstanding habit and the psychological aspects of smoking and dipping. Usually people make several serious attempts before they are finally able to quit for good!

Still Want a Puff?

Smoking harms your whole body. Smoking decreases your immune system and increases your risk of infections. The toxic ingredients in cigarette smoke travel throughout your entire body. It has been found in every organ of the body, as well as in breast milk. If you smoke, your cells will not get the amount of oxygen needed to work properly. This is because carbon monoxide keeps red blood cells from carrying a full load of oxygen. Carcinogens, or cancer-causing poisons, in tobacco smoke bind to cells in your airways and throughout your body. Nicotine also is absorbed readily when tobacco is chewed. With regular use of tobacco, levels of nicotine accumulate in the body during the day and persist overnight. Thus, daily smokers or chewers are exposed to the effects of nicotine for 24 hours each day!

Is Smokeless Tobacco Safer than Cigarettes?

Many people think smokeless tobacco (also known as chewing, spit, dip tobacco, or snuff) is safer than smoking cigarettes. The truth is that smokeless tobacco use is not safe. It is associated with all sorts of health problems just as is cigarette smoking.

Remember:

- All tobacco can cause cancer.
- People who use smokeless tobacco are several times more likely to be at risk for oral cancer than people who don't use tobacco.
- Increased heart rate, blood pressure, and blood levels of nicotine of smokeless tobacco users are the same to those of cigarette smokers.
- After only a few years of smokeless tobacco use, a permanent sore can develop in the mouth.
- Other results of smokeless tobacco use are inflammation of the gums, gum recession, tooth loss, and changes in the lining of your month.

More Reasons to Quit?

We all have some good personal reasons to kick the habit! Perhaps it is to breath better, feel sick less often, have more money in our pockets and bank accounts for other cool things, more time to tackle work and fun activities, or to feel better about ourselves.... The list can go on and on... What are your top reasons for saying adios to Tobacco?

Anyone can quit smoking or dipping if they set their heart and mind to it! Before you quit, **START** by taking these five important steps:

S = Set a quit date.

T = Tell family, friends, and co-workers that you plan to quit

A = Anticipate and plan for the challenges you'll face while quitting.

R = Remove cigarettes and other tobacco products from your home, car, and work.

T = Talk to your doctor about getting help to quit.

More Ways to Quit!

There is a National Help Line set up to help Americans quit smoking! The Help Line is free and you may speak to an expert who can answer your questions, and assist you with a plan to kick the habit! Call **1-877-448-7848**

There are some excellent web based programs that are effective in helping you quit! Consider using one of them!

- Quit Smoking Now! www.smokfree.gov
- Freedom From Smoking www.kintera.org/site/apps/kb/home/login/asp
- I Want to Quit www.trytostop.org
- Spit Tobacco: A Guide to Quitting
www.nidcr.nih.gov/HealthInformation/OralHealthInformationIndex/SpitTobacco?QuittingGuide/
- The Smoking Lamp Is Out! www-nehc.med.navy.mil/hp/tobacco

For more information on this and other health and wellness topics, visit
Navy Knowledge Online (NKO) at <http://www.nko.navy.mil> or the
Navy Environmental Health Center (NEHC) at <http://www-nehc.med.navy.mil/hp>.